1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN1
Nyakyusa

Fox-Strangeways; the late Mr. Eustace of the Tanganyika Agricultural Department, and Mrs. Eustace; the Rev. and Mrs. Marx of the Moravian mission at Rungwe; the Rev. and Mrs. Faulds of the Church of Scotland mission at Karonga; the Rev. and Mrs. Galbraith of Livingstonia; Mr. Godfried Schuler, a planter, and his wife; and the Officers of the King's African Rifles then stationed at Māsoko.

When planning work among the Nyakyusa, we were guided by Lord Lugard, who had lively recollections of 'the north-enders', and by the Rev. D. R. and Mrs. MacKenzie, missionaries of the Church of Scotland in the area for many years. Mr. MacKenzie had published *The Spirit-Ridden Konde* in 1925, and was deeply interested in the Nyakyusa-Ngonde people; he lent us manuscript notes on the language and gave us the most generous encouragement.

Godfrey Wilson was concerned to make a general sociological study of the Nyakyusa, while I had been commissioned by the International African Institute to study particularly the effects of Christian missions on the community; in practice we found it profitable each to work primarily with our own sex, though we did not do so exclusively. Nyakyusa men proved better informants than women, largely, we think, because the men all had a training in logic, gained in discussion in the villages and in court. Women lacked this training and, except for doctors and those who had had some schooling, they found it difficult to give an account of their customs. The pagan women were markedly less coherent than conservative Pondo women (among whom I had previously worked[1]), a difference which I attribute to the narrow scope for leadership among the women in the traditional Nyakyusa society. And the difference between conservative pagan Nyakyusa women (doctors excepted) and Christians who had had some schooling was very noticeable.

Material on pagan and Christian, as well as that on men and women, overlapped at every point; and shortly after leaving the field we agreed that to describe pagan and Christian groups separately would distort the facts very seriously, and that we would collaborate in writing three books on Nyakyusa kinship, Nyakyusa villages, and Nyakyusa chiefdoms, including in each of

[1] Monica Hunter, *Reaction to Conquest: Effects of Contact with Europeans on the Pondo of South Africa* (1936).

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

them an analysis of pagan and Christian differences. Godfrey Wilson died on active service before the writing of these books was begun, and I am thus solely responsible for the form of this volume, but the material is from the field notes of us both. Portions of Chapter I, and a few paragraphs in other chapters have been quoted (with minor emendations) from articles already published by him. Throughout the book the present tense refers to the period 1934–8 when the material was collected.

The problem of combining adequate documentation with lucidity has not yet been solved in anthropology: either monographs are so loaded with texts and case records as to be almost unreadable, or else they are impressionistic, and the student is left wondering just what evidence there is for the author's conclusions. We have attempted to meet this difficulty by publishing certain relevant documents in a separate section. These documents represent only a small selection of the field notes used, but at least they illustrate the type of evidence on which our argument is based. Many of them are translations of texts written in Nyakyusa by Mwaisumu and Mwaikambo from their own knowledge, or at the dictation of others.

The maps have been drawn by my friend and colleague at Rhodes University College, Professor J. V. L. Rennie, to whom I am much indebted for the time and trouble he has lavished on them. The map of Rungwe District is based on one compiled by Mr. R. de Z. Hall, and traced by Mr. G. D. Arthur, which was given me by the courtesy of the Survey Department of Tanganyika.

Finally, I am indebted to Dr. Audrey Richards, Professor Meyer Fortes, and Professor Dover Wilson for reading this manuscript and making many valuable suggestions.

Rhodes University College,
Grahamstown, 1949.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The field material on which this study was based was collected under the auspices of the Rockefeller Foundation and the International African Institute.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

first-hand knowledge of them. On the coast they are classed with Nyakyusa and Ngonde as *Sokile*, a nickname derived from the traditional Nyakyusa greeting.

This book is concerned with the Nyakyusa.[1] What it contains is true in general terms for the people of Ngonde, but how far it is applicable to the smaller groups cited we are not certain. The Ndali, Sukwa, and Penja, are said to have long had an age-village organization; and Henga, Nyika and Kisi living intermingled with Ngonde and Nyakyusa have adopted it; but of the customs of the Wenya and Lambya we know little. Dr. Kerr Cross and Monteith Fotheringham, who travelled extensively in the area before 1890, reported that the Ndali and Sukwa (of Misuku) were very similar to the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people, but that the Lambya were different, practising shifting *citemene* cultivation, and living in stockaded villages.[2]

According to their own traditions the Nyakyusa and Ngonde chiefs (who trace descent from common ancestors) came ten generations ago from Kinga country, on the Livingstone mountains, and found the Rungwe and North Nyasa country already occupied. They established themselves as chiefs and have since been increasing the area of their occupation. The Kinga also affirm that their chiefs are related to those of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde, and they join with the Nyakyusa in sacrifice to common ancestors at Lubaga and LiKyala (see Map III), but the Kinga culture is quite distinct from that of the Nyakyusa and Ngonde; we stayed long enough in Kinga country to convince ourselves that the Kinga live in kinship villages and not in age-villages, and that they differ from the Nyakyusa in many other respects.

There seems little doubt that the Nyakyusa and Ngonde people have been expanding in an area not uninhabited, but sparsely inhabited, and that the assimilation of the Penja and other groups now proceeding is no new phenomenon, but part of a process which has long been going on. Within recent years over 2,000

[1] The Nyakyusa as here defined numbered 159,044 in Rungwe district at the 1931 census, and 3,732 outside the district; the Ndali 22,834, the Lambya (within Rungwe district, and not including those in Nyasaland) 12,403, and the Kisi (in Njombe district) 2,115. *Tanganyika Territory, Census of the Native Population, 1931.*

[2] D. Kerr-Cross, 'Geographical Notes on the Country between Lakes Nyassa, Rukwa, and Tanganyika, *The Scottish Geographical Magazine*, Vol. VI (1890), p. 286; L. M. Fotheringham, *Adventures in Nyassaland* (1891), pp. 129–33. Nyondo was a Lambya chief, cf. Godfrey Wilson, op. cit., p. 10.

1: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

traditionally sovereign chiefs are entitled to sit with their village headmen, and assist the president and his village headmen in the hearing of cases. Much of the legal business previously transacted by each chief in his own country is now taken to court (*KwiKoroti*); but the power of village headmen to settle disputes by arbitration in their separate villages is still the basis of the legal system.

Though the Administration has worked through the traditional authorities it has consciously and deliberately modified the traditional system; and, as part of its policy of development, it has established schools, dispensaries, and nurseries for coffee-seedlings and other plants. There are three schools in Rungwe district receiving Government grants: one directly under the Administration, one under the Native Authority, and one a mission school. There are also a great number of 'bush schools', that is, mission village schools under uncertificated teachers giving instruction in the three R's and in religion. Over 19,000 children (12·6 per cent of the population served) are enrolled in the various schools; but 96 per cent of these are in 'bush schools', many of whom never learn even to read and write.

The structure of Nyakyusa society has been further complicated by the conversion of a substantial minority (16 per cent in 1938)[1] of the people to Christianity. The Christians form a group with values radically different from those of the pagans, on whom they react in innumerable ways.[2] The growth of this diversity in the society is a direct effect of its diminishing isolation.

To treat of Nyakyusa villages as if missions, or the Administration, or migrant labour and coffee export did not exist would simplify, but distort our analysis. We have therefore included some account of the differences in behaviour between pagan and Christian, of the effects of centralization on the position of village headmen, and of the influence of trade and migration on economic co-operation in the village. A discussion of the organization of schools and Christian congregations; of the development of courts of record, and 'court districts'; of the relation between

[1] Calculated from figures supplied by the courtesy of the missions and the independent African Churches working in the district.

[2] Moslems are very few and they have little influence on the community as a whole. These few are mostly Swahili traders, Ngoni settlers, or soldiers of the K.A.R. from Nyasaland. We heard of only two or three Nyakyusa who had turned Moslem.

1:Wilson E-5 (1934-1938) 1951 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

●128 chiefs and the Administration, and between Nyakyusa workers and their employers, falls outside the scope of this book.

e. The subject of study

121 Nyakyusa society may be viewed as three circles of relationship —the relationships of kinship, village relationships, and relationships within and beyond the chiefdoms. This book is concerned with the second of these circles, that found within and between villages. Such relationships are not fully intelligible apart from the relationships of kinship and of the chiefdom, but a measure of abstraction is necessary—it is not possible to talk about everything at once. A sketch of kinship relationships has already been published;[1] a full account of them and of the relationships of chiefdoms has been planned; and the general theoretical approach has been set forth in *The Analysis of Social Change*[2] and in a paper entitled *Some Possibilities and Limitations of Anthropological Research*.[3]

The fundamental question we pose is *why age-villages*? Why should the Nyakyusa differ from all their neighbours of whom we have knowledge in the form of their villages? Why should they live with contemporaries, rather than kinsmen? The attempt to answer this leads us to discuss the characteristics of Nyakyusa society, which can be shown to be associated with the age-village organization, so that we can reformulate the question thus: *What are the pecularities of Nyakyusa society not found in neighbouring societies with kinship villages*? We know too little about the neighbouring societies to answer this question fully, but some indication of the Nyakyusa peculiarities is given, and an analysis of these compels us to consider the relation between Nyakyusa values and social structure.

[1] Monica Wilson, 'Nyakyusa Kinship' in *African Systems of Kinship and Marriage*, edited by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown and Daryll Forde, 1950.
[2] G. and M. Wilson, 1945.
[3] Monica Wilson, 1948.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

mediate ancestors of the participants, and another set which concern chiefdoms and groups of chiefdoms, and are directed towards the immediate ancestors of ruling chiefs and certain distant ancestors of the chiefs' line, heroes in Nyakyusa history. The name of one of these heroes, Kyala, has been used by the missionaries to translate the word 'God', but all the evidence available goes to show that Kyala was, traditionally, but one of several distant ancestors to whom regular sacrifices were made on behalf of a large group of chiefdoms. All the rituals of this type—those directed to family shades, the chiefs' ancestors, and the heroes—are concerned with that which is beneath (*pasi*), not that which is above. Men look to the earth where corpses are buried, not to any sky god.

The theme of the present volume is the rituals celebrated by kinsmen at death, at the puberty and marriage of a girl (the last two events usually coinciding), at birth, especially twin birth, and in misfortune. A further volume will deal with the communal rituals celebrated before the annual break of the rains; whenever public misfortune such as drought, flood, famine, or plague occurs or threatens; before battle; and when a chief is succeeded by his sons, and the younger generation take over power from their elders. There is no circumcision or initiation of men other than the 'coming out' ceremony, when a whole generation takes over responsibility for the administration and defence of the chiefdom from their fathers. Some reference to three of the heroes—Kyala, Lwembe, and Mbasi—is made in texts on the rituals of kinsmen, but our discussion of them is postponed to the second book in which the rituals directed to them are described.

A section of the Nyakyusa people is Christian and its influence on pagan thought and practice is appreciable; however, discussion of this is also postponed to the second book, since it is most evident in the changing concept of Kyala. There, too, the connections between change in ritual and other aspects of the social structure between 1934 and 1955 are analysed.

The Nyakyusa cult of senior relatives (like any ancestor cult) is not intelligible or significant apart from a study of kinship, and it may be argued that this material should be presented only as part of an analysis of Nyakyusa kinship, but we cannot discuss everything at once and some measure of abstraction is necessary. No one ritual among the Nyakyusa is fully intelligible without reference to the whole series of rituals. The principle, propounded forty-five years ago by Professor Radcliffe-Brown, that a symbol

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

the group. In the few cases in which our informant may have been giving his own individual interpretation, 'putting a bucket down into his subconscious and pulling it up', it was at least a Nyakyusa subconscious, and the interpretation is in terms of the culture. It is with common, not individual, symbols that we are concerned: what is offered in this book is a sociological, not a psychological, analysis.

Similarities between the symbolism of Nyakyusa rituals and the symbolism of dreams and neuroses in Western society will be obvious to readers. That preoccupation with anal and oral functions, with 'nakedness' (though the Nyakyusa habitually wore the most exiguous of coverings), with death, coition, and birth, with mastery ('overstepping') and incest, which is characteristic of the rituals we describe, is evident also in any textbook of psychoanalysis dealing with Western Europeans and Americans; and certain symbols such as a house, a doorway, a spear, seed, and so forth are common to both cultures; but here we are not concerned to trace these similarities. Our business is to lay bare the symbolic pattern of the Nyakyusa without reference to the Western tradition.

The material used for the sociological analysis of ritual consists of two types: observation or description of events, and statements about associations. The greatest difficulty in presenting it has been to choose between a chronological account of each ritual, followed by the Nyakyusa translation or interpretation of the symbolism, and then by the sociological analysis; and an integrated account combining the interpretation and analysis with the description. The advantage of the first method is that the validity of both interpretation and analysis can be more easily judged since the evidence on which it is based is fully set out; the disadvantage is that the description itself implies interpretation and analysis. The symbolism is often implicit in the description of events, and the separation of description from interpretation involves repetition; at the same time the classification of events and symbols is itself a form of analysis, and the separation of description from analysis tends to conceal this. The present study is a compromise between the two approaches. Where events and their symbolism are fairly straightforward, the interpretation accompanies the description; but where, as in the rituals of farewell to the dead, puberty and marriage, and abnormal birth, they are complicated, and the interpretation may well be questioned, accounts of the events are separated from detailed evidence on symbolism. Analysis is neces-

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

sarily implied all through, but since the argument can only be unfolded step by step (for no one ritual can be fully analysed until all are described) a discussion of it is reserved to the concluding chapters. In interpreting the symbolism, cross reference between the different rituals of the cycles would be too frequent to give in the text. Readers wishing to follow up references to the symbolism of bananas, for example, or *ikipiki* medicine, should use the index.

The link between religious beliefs and morality (in the sense of right behaviour) is very clear among the Nyakyusa. Many misfortunes are attributed to sin, that is, wrong-doings (*inongwa*) thought to be supernaturally punished. Indeed, to the Nyakyusa the idea of the wicked man 'spreading himself like a green bay tree'[1] is inconceivable, and the disciples' question: 'Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?'[2] cold common sense. Here we are concerned with the form of morality[3] sanctioned by Nyakyusa religion, with the conception of good and evil, and with the relation between belief and behaviour.[4] A table of private misfortunes attributed to the anger of senior relatives is included in this volume; public misfortunes will be discussed in the succeeding one; and a table of misfortunes attributed to witchcraft, sorcery, and the legitimate anger of neighbours ('the breath of men') has been given in the study of Nyakyusa age-villages already published.[5] While the Nyakyusa lay great emphasis on the correct performance, in every detail, of certain rituals, their very performance implies co-operation between kinsmen, and not only co-operation but amity. For 'anger in the heart', if unconfessed, may bring misfortune. Thus though the outward form is stressed, the inward and spiritual is not totally ignored.

We proceed on the assumption that men express in ritual what moves them most; that the form of expression is conventional and obligatory, and that therefore in ritual the values of a group (as opposed to those of individuals) are revealed.

[1] Psalm xxxvii: 35. [2] John ix, 2.

[3] I cannot accept Professor Radcliffe-Brown's definition of morality as the control of conduct by 'public opinion and conscience' as opposed to control by religion. Nor do I accept Professor Macbeath's argument that primitive man has an idea of good quite apart from religion. A. E. Taylor's view of morality comes much closer to the facts as shown in Nyakyusa society.

cf. A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*, p. 172; A. Macbeath, *Experiments in Living*, Gifford Lectures 1948–9; A. E. Taylor, *The Faith of a Moralist*, Gifford Lectures 1926–8.

[4] The germ of the book is Godfrey Wilson's 'An African morality', *Africa*, 1936.

[5] Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, pp. 198–213.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

husband when at her husband's home. Kakune, a doctor, explained: 'The ritual for a woman is that of her husband's group, always. My mother was Lugulu, but at her death we did the Kukwe ritual. If my daughter marries a Sangu and dies, they will do the Sangu ritual; she has moved.' We attended a death ritual which was actually performed in two slightly different ways by two sets of mourners. A member of a Sangu family, long established in Selya, had died; sons and daughters of the family performed what was said to be the Sangu ritual, but the children of daughters married to Selya men performed the Selya ritual. Whether the Sangu ritual is really so similar to the Selya ritual as this celebration suggests is doubtful—it seems unlikely, since the Sangu are very different from the Nyakyusa in other respects and their languages are not mutually intelligible—but some sort of adjustment had been made by this foreign family living in Selya and by others in a like position. Our informants *expected* to find parallels to the events of their own rituals in the rituals of neighbouring groups, and they expected also to find *minor* differences. Any variations are explained by the phrase 'that is the custom in their lineage', and the officiant is the final arbitrator as to what is correct. A number of informants also pointed out that the staple foods were used in the death ritual and that these varied somewhat with the area. 'We eat the principal food of the country—it differs with different people. The Kisi and Ngonde (of Nyasaland) use fish, the Ndali use goats, we Nyakyusa cannot use rice but the Swahili would. Our food is bananas.[1] The pumpkin, which we also use, is a very old vegetable and is still much eaten; it is one of the best vegetables.' The Sangu use millet porridge, the Penja maize and beans.

In this book are described the rituals of the main cultural groups of the Nyakyusa—those of the people of Selya and Masoko and the Lake-shore plain (MuNgonde)[2] which are similar, and those of the Kukwe which are different, and a few references are made to other variations. The variations are suggestive, for though the details differ, the values and attitudes expressed are identical. There are also minor differences between families of the same cultural group, and in the practice of different officiants, but their

[1] The Nyakyusa use *imatoki* as a general word for plantains and bananas, though *itoki* is properly one variety of plantain. 'Bananas' is used here to include all varieties of bananas and plantains.

[2] cf. Monica Wilson, *Good Company*, p. 2.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

interpretations scarcely differ. Thus the commonly accepted idea that ritual forms are more stable than the interpretation of symbolism[1] does not hold for the Nyakyusa.

The account of the ritual cycle begins with an analysis of funeral rites, for of all the family rituals they involve the greatest emotional tension and are the most elaborate, as well as being performed far more frequently than any others. Moreover, in them are adumbrated symbolic patterns which recur again and again throughout the cycle; in them is apparent that preoccupation with fertility characteristic of the cycle—they are a rite of creation as well as a farewell to the dead—and in them lies the key to an understanding of the conception of the *abasyuka*, 'those who have risen from the dead', that is, the shades.

The principal participants in the rituals are immediate kin—parents and children, siblings, grandparents and grandchildren—but the circle included varies with the particular ritual concerned and more distant relatives and neighbours are involved in varying degrees. In order to bring out these differences and avoid repetition, the detailed discussion of who takes part is deferred until after all the rituals have been described.

Should any Nyakyusa, reading this, feel that matters have been revealed which should remain secret, I would remind them that the interpretation of traditional ritual reveals a profound similarity in the phantasies of the Nyakyusa and those of other races; and such understanding of the dark places of men's minds as the *abanyago* possess may swell that body of knowledge which is the heritage of men of all races and cultures.

[1] A. R. Radcliffe-Brown, *Structure and Function in Primitive Society* (1952), pp. 155–7; A. N. Whitehead, *Symbolism: Its Meaning and Effects* (1928), p. 75.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Selya, Mu Ngonde

identification of the mourners with the corpse and the separation of the shade from both of them. 'What they do to the participants they do to the deceased. . . . If they are not cleansed he is still muddy. . . . We throw away the corpse, the contamination of death, into the river . . . we drive the shade away off our bodies to join his fellows . . . we separate the corpse and the shade.' Thirdly, bringing back the shade as a beneficent spirit into the home. 'In the ritual we tell the shade to go away and join his fellows, and then to come back with them and warm himself by the fire in our house. . . . At first the shade is in our bodies, we cast him out . . . at first it is as if we were still holding the corpse in our arms, but we throw the corpse away into the river . . . the shade we bring back into our house.'

Fourthly, a miming of the actions of a madman in eating excrement as a prophylactic against behaviour of that sort. The dead, if not separated from the living, bring madness upon them, and simulating madness is a protection against it.

Fifthly, the corpse and faeces are identified: 'The corpse is filth, it is excrement. And so when a madman for whom they have not performed the ritual eats filth that is the corpse, he is still holding it, they have not done the ritual for him.'

Sixthly, the shades are identified with semen and seeds and their control over potency and fertility is recognized. The Nyakyusa think that they are always present in sexual intercourse, and symbols of sexual intercourse are interpreted as a means of driving out the shade from the participants' bodies.

Seventhly, 'the food which he hoed' is symbolically 'given to the shade' of the man who has just died and he is urged to be satisfied: 'You, shade, do not think there was little food at your ritual. . . . The food which we have eaten you have eaten . . . do not create hunger.'

Eighthly, the shade is acknowledged as a kinsman by eating with him food and beer mixed with *ikipiki*—the symbol of agnatic kinship—before he is driven away.

Lastly, a dead man is formally replaced by his heir, a woman by her sister or her brother's daughter.

These conceptions are expressed in the following texts which are given as they were recorded by Godfrey Wilson. No attempt has been made to systematize Kasitile's or Mwandisi's arguments, but the statements made during numerous sessions have been placed in sequence, and are separated only by dots.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa
Kukwe

Record of M. W., 13 September 1936

881 789 I arrived at nine o'clock in the morning to find Syungu, the elderly wife of the chief's senior brother, who acts as officiant in all the rituals for the chief's family, grinding and cooking *inyemba* together with a powdered medicine and red pigment, to make an ointment. I asked the purpose of the medicine. She replied: 'It's *ikipiki* that she may be heavy, that she may bear children and not be barren.'

273 789 Some of the chief's wives gave me beer—ordinary beer. They themselves were drinking from a pot which had stood in the inner part of the house (*kusofo*) and to which medicine had been added. They explained that it might be drunk only by themselves, the chief's wives. A strange woman, a Penja, came along and, though warned that this pot was not for her, insisted on drinking some of it. She explained how Penja [171] ritual differed from that of the Kukwe—they kill sheep for the puberty ritual. Usually this beer stands to brew in the seclusion hut 'on the litter'.

881 The women were preparing a dish of beans and bananas cooked together, and when it was ready a little was given to the officiant, some was put aside for the girl (*unsungu*),[1] and the remains were offered to the guests. One of the cooks threw away the central stem of the head of bananas used, but was told by the officiant to fetch it back, as all the rubbish must be cleared away together at the end of the rite.

After midday the officiant shaved some hair from the girl's temples and the back of her neck, and then she shaved the mother completely. I asked why the girl was not shaved completely and was told: 'Her fellows would laugh at her if she had no hair.' The officiant prepared four banana leaves, stripping each off on one side of the mid-rib and shredding the other half so as to make a rough fringe. Standing with her back to the girl, she touched herself over the genitals, breasts, and forehead, then handed the leaf back over her head, telling the girl to fasten it round her waist. She repeated the performance with the second leaf, telling the girl to fasten it round her neck. The girl complied with the first leaf but refused the second, saying: 'I have a cloth,' and she pulled her breast cloth round her shoulders. The officiant followed the same procedure with the girl's mother, who fastened both leaves round herself. Then one of the chief's wives took the mother on her shoulders and carried her round the corner of the house. The bride followed on foot, and three other wives of the chief, singing:

Kyanalu
Kyatiko
Kyanalwe
Kyatiko

● [28] [1] Usually we have translated *unsungu* by 'bride', but in this case she was not betrothed: cf. footnote 2, p. 73.

2: Wilson E-5 (1934-1938)1957 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

V. CAUSES OF MISFORTUNE

761 (*a*) *The death of Katasya*

[28] The following account of the death of Katasya is quoted in full because it illustrates how several possible causes of misfortune were considered. Possible causes mentioned were:

(a) The anger of his junior kinsmen
(b) The witchcraft of his wives
(c) The anger of his shades
(d) The anger of his neighbours because he had given them too small a cut of a bull killed as a sacrifice to his shades
(e) The adultery of his son with three of his wives
(f) The sorcery of his half-brother's son, Mwamukinga, with whom there was a long-standing quarrel over inheritance and whom he had accused of killing his (Mwamukinga's) full brother
(g) The sorcery of the Chief Mwaihojo, for Katasya, a man of the neighbouring Chief Mwaipopo, had built and cultivated on land claimed by both Mwaihojo and Mwaipopo

Record of G. W., 4/1/38

761 Angombwike told me at midday that Katasya had died. He was a village headman of Mwaipopo, the fellow of Mwainyopolela. His case (*inongwa*) was thus:

782 The millet did not grow in his field, so he called all his children to his homestead and killed a big bull for them, saying: 'Perhaps my children are angry at home. Perhaps my wives have worked witchcraft.' But to the neighbours he gave one leg and the children at home ate the rest. He did not, however, live long. He died immediately. It is said that the meat is still there. They have not eaten it. Such is the case of his death.

Kasitile, when I called on him yesterday, was out and his wife said he had gone to see Katasya who was ill.

Later in the day—4.1.38. Likusyila came in and I asked about Katasya's death.

[787] But he has not died, he is still just alive. We heard that the millet failed in his field and the maize and beans in all his gardens. They all failed. One of his wives went into a trance repeatedly. She said: 'Those beneath are angry. Seek a bull and kill it.' Then he sought one, but 761 now they have killed him. Perhaps he stinted his fellows in the village 578 of meat, because if a man kills his animal alone and his fellows hear

3: Mackenzie M-5 (ca. 1925) 1925
FN17 Ngonde FN17

Preface

THIS book is not an attempt to depict the daily life of the Konde people; it rather aims at indicating, so far as an outsider can, the leading ideas and practices which make up the background, leaving to others the task of bringing the foreground into proper relief. And, after many years' residence and work among the Konde, I feel increasingly how much the fact of being a foreigner among them limits one's understanding of the people whose ideas he attempts to set down on paper. The task has been undertaken largely at the request of some of the leading men of the tribe, who are alive to the fact that the old days are passing, even among the conservative Konde, and that, if a record is to be made at all, it must be made without delay.

There is no one to whom I must acknowledge indebtedness to the same extent as I must, and now do, to native chiefs and common people, educated and otherwise; to doctors, diviners, hunters, fishers; every kind of native in fact, from whom I have caught hints, in sudden and unintentional flashes of revelation, or in sustained conversation, of what is in the Bantu mind. And therefore I have, in most chapters, aimed at using language which indicates the native attitude to the various beliefs dealt with; an attitude in most cases of unquestioning faith.

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

AN INTRODUCTION TO NYAKYUSA SOCIETY

By GODFREY WILSON

128 This paper is an attempt to give an outline of the pagan culture of the Nyakyusa people of South Tanganyika[1] in relation to the three fundamental groups into which their society is articulated—the family, the age-village and the chiefdom. Every Nyakyusa belongs to some family, to some age-village, to some chiefdom; and in his membership of these three groups is comprehended most of his behaviour.

121 Sociology is the objective study of human relationships which, as they only exist in men's activities, can only there be studied. The systematic investigation of culture, of the common economic, ceremonial, legal, religious and other activities which obtain among some group of people, is the sole possible method of discovering the system of human relationships which makes of the group a society. It is only by viewing all the facts of culture in the light of the relationships of the people concerned that we can see the full objective significance of those facts, it is only so that we can see the body or actuality of those relationships. For human relationships are the most inclusive facts of social life, they are the form[2] which the sociologist seeks for in the matter of his special field; whether he is engaged in description, or in the functional analysis of a single culture, or in the comparative analysis of several cultures, human relationships are always his goal, which he must reach if his account of fact is to be coherent, if his explanations are to be complete.

The method adopted in this paper is that of Professor Malinowski and his followers; it involves a repudiation of the one-sided Durkheimian concept of "social integration" or "solidarity," and a realization that culture, consisting as it does of human behaviour with a human meaning, has a material reality which makes possible and conditions the human relationships that integrate it and give it form. This point is elaborated in the concluding section.

128 In order to make Nyakyusa society into a wholly lucid unit, intelligibly comparable with other societies, it would be necessary to undertake a complete functional analysis, and to explain in detail why it is that different members of this group on different occasions generally conform,

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[1] I am greatly indebted to the Rockefeller Foundation for the Fellowship which makes my investigation possible.

[2] By "form" is meant, not a sensible pattern, but an intelligible system of fact.

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

128 as they do, in their behaviour and their mutual relationships to a common type. Space forbids such an undertaking here; and it is necessary to emphasize that, although the most significant facts are described in an orderly manner, and although certain reasons for these facts are indicated in their specific character and in their connections with one another, yet these reasons are not fully or systematically worked out, and the result is a description which leaves the facts only half-explained. And, in so far as this society is not here fully analyzed, so it is not yet fully comparable with others. The reader of this paper will detect many points of similarity and of difference between Nyakyusa society and some other with which he is familiar, but the comparison cannot be made to yield any propositions about the nature of human societies in general until the facts of both have been fully explained in terms of their particular social, cultural, and external conditions.

Climate, Cultural Groups, and European Contact.

101 131 133 The Nyakyusa live in the Rungwe District of South Tanganyika in the Rift Valley at the head of Lake Nyasa. The valley is dominated and closed at its North end by the recently extinct Rungwe volcano, from whose foot the land, starting as an upland plateau 5,000 ft. above sea-level, tumbles southwards for twenty-five miles in a broken cascade of hills, to level out in a plain fifteen or twenty miles from Lake Nyasa. The Lake is 1200 ft. above the sea. The East wall of the Rift rises to 10,000 ft. or more in the peaks of the Livingstone Mountains, but the West wall is two [132] or three thousand feet lower. The climate is very wet, for about 130″ of rain fall each year, and, at 9° South of the Equator, is also very hot. [116 731] The rain and the sun together make the land extremely fertile; the district is thickly populated (over 100 to the square mile), famine is rare and the Nyakyusa are far better fed than most of their neighbours. Rice 177 241 was introduced into the plain by Arabs, coffee by the German Missionaries in the hills, and these two crops to-day, under the enthusiastic care and guidance of the Government Agricultural Department, bring to many Nyakyusa a small but steadily increasing cash income.

262 241 Their main foods are bananas, maize, beans, sweet potatoes and a variety of greenstuffs, together with meat and curds from their cattle. Millet is extensively grown and is used both for making beer and for eating in the form of porridge.

101 The name *Nyakyusa* is nowadays used by themselves as a general name for all those who have similar speech and customs and who live in Tanganyika; but formerly it only covered those who live in the South of the district, in the plain and up in the hills as far North as the administra-

8: Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

The Chiefdom and Wider Groups

(*a*) *The "Coming Out"*

● 128 Space forbids a full description of the relationships of villagers in all their intricate detail, but a short description of the "Coming Out" (*ovosɔka*) which is at the same time the most important legal act and the most exciting ceremonial of Nyakyusa life, will, I hope, make the nature of the age-village completely clear, and will also provide us with an easy transition to the discussion of the organization of the chiefdom (*ekisu*).

622 631 I have never seen a "Coming Out" properly; on one occasion I travelled to see one and arrived just a day late when all the important action and ceremonial was over, but I have had it fully described to me at different times by several people. Every chief (*omalafyale*) is normally succeeded in his chieftainship by two sons, who divide his country between them. There are sometimes exceptions to this: in very large chiefdoms three or even four sons sometimes succeed, each taking a portion of the country; and in minor chiefdoms, that is in small chiefdoms which have come under the dominion of a neighbouring and powerful chief, only one son of the minor chief succeeds to the whole of that country.[14] But the rule is that two sons divide the country of their father. This rule worked well in the old days, for till quite lately the Nyakyusa have been an expanding people in a district too large for their needs; and the combined countries of the two sons nearly always, in the old days, covered a greater area of effective occupation than the country of their father which they had divided. Now saturation point is approaching, or has come, and the rule makes for ever smaller and smaller chiefdoms. Various forces are tending to the alteration of the rule, but it is still a vital part of the constitution. (*vide infra.*)

The "Coming Out" (*ovosɔka*) is a series of legal acts by which the country of an old chief and his great commoners is, with certain reservations, divided and handed over into the possession and control of his two sons and their respective great commoners. These legal acts are accompanied by much pomp and ceremony. It is at once the initiation of all the youth of the old chiefdom into public life, the constitution of two new [796] political units and the proclamation of two new chiefs. The "Coming Out" not only consists of a series of legal acts and public ceremonies, but of religious ritual as well, action is taken to increase the personal qualities appropriate in a chief and his great commoners by magical means.

[14] These minor chiefdoms have nothing to do with the present system of subordinating some chiefs to others (*vide infra.* sec. (b))

8:Wilson E-5 (1934-1936)1936 FN17 Ngonde FN17
Nyakyusa

every year two hereditary Kinga priests come a three days journey from their own country to participate in the sacrifice of a black cow to the spirits of Lwembe and his descendants.

Down by Lake Nyasa, in the extreme South East of the Nyakyusa district, there is another equally sacred spot where sacrifices were, and I believe still are[21] made to Kyala, a younger brother of Lwembe.

The Christians and the Moslems form other religious groups which transcend the boundaries of a single chiefdom, but an examination of the Nyakyusa Christian and Moslem communities is beyond the scope of this paper.

The political group which is constituted by a Court district, though only ten years old, is of great importance in Nyakyusa society; but here again the detailed examination of its organization and the relationships of its members is beyond the scope of this paper.

Conclusion: Culture and Society

The aim of sociology is to describe single forms of society fully and, in comparison with one another, to explain them completely, in so far as reasons can be found within this particular scientific field. Neither full description nor complete explanation of Nyakyusa society has here been attempted: many important facts have been omitted from the account, irregularities of detail have been slurred over, the connections of fact have been only occasionally and sketchily established, and no systematic comparison of this unit with others has been made at all.

But the method of this paper has involved an analysis, summary and general though it has been, of the nature of some of the many institutions in which the Nyakyusa meet, of some of the actual elements in their relationships with one another. It is in their dealings with the earth and their cattle, with the spirits and with men who break the law, in their discussions and arguments, their ceremonial feasts, their giving and receiving, in their loves and hates and in their admiration and mockery of one another that they forever make and remake their own human relationships.

Culture is the matter of which society is the form; inseparable in fact they are only intelligible together. No two men can be related unless they both do something and unless their activities are somehow connected. Nor can either escape relationship with his fellow if what

[21] I have not yet been there to investigate.